



# Building Department Newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- 5' is closest you can build a home to the property line
- Less than 19% moisture in any wood used to frame a house
- Building Inspectors enforce the minimum standards of the International Residential and Building Codes.
- No signs allowed in the Right-of-way

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## Did you know?



- ◆ Those plumbing vents which protrude through the roofs of homes are what allow water to drain from kitchen sinks, bath lavatories, tubs, etc.
- ◆ Residential and Commercial Building Codes do not address aesthetics such as painting, cabinetry, flooring installation, wallpaper, etc.
- ◆ Water heaters should be drained periodically to remove sediment from the bottom of the tank. This simple homeowner maintenance will extend the life of your water heater.
- ◆ Electrical ground-fault circuit outlets located in your kitchen, bathrooms and outside are designed to protect you from electrical shock by "tripping" itself when a fault current is detected.
- ◆ The brass devices that screw onto your outside faucets, called vacuum breakers, are actually designed to prevent water from your garden hose from entering into and contaminating the potable water system of your home. Some outside faucets are equipped internally with similar features.
- ◆ Property owners are required to maintain all easements running along or through their property. This includes mowing and weeding of those areas.
- ◆ If you hire a contractor to cut-up dead trees, trim limbs and shrubs, etc. on your property, it is the responsibility of the contractor you hire to remove and dispose of all debris. Only organic debris generated by the homeowner will be picked up and removed by the City. All construction waste and debris must be disposed of in dumpsters or other similar waste containers.
- ◆ The City of Madison is a member of the International Code Council who publishes and distributes the various building related codes adopted by jurisdictions. Active members of the International Code Council include Code Officials, State, County, City and other governmental agencies around the world.
- ◆ The closest one can build a home to their property line is five feet according to the 2006 International Residential Code adopted by the City. Any closer than five feet requires the exterior wall parallel to the property line be fire rated with no openings (windows, doors, etc.). This is designed to protect your home from exposure to fire from adjacent properties.
- ◆ Wood used in framing a new home must contain less than 19% moisture content. Any more than this will cause the wood to bow or twist compromising structural integrity in load bearing walls or affecting aesthetics in non-load bearing walls..

*“hundreds of deaths and injuries each year from due to improperly constructed residential decks”*



## City Building Inspector Responsibilities



Many citizens do not realize or can appreciate the role Building Inspectors play in building our community. Building Inspectors enforce the minimum standards of the International Residential and Building Codes. The various codes are written to protect the safety, health and welfare of building occupants and the public. Building Inspectors use the codes to measure the degree by which a building is constructed in

meeting specific standards for framing, electrical systems, plumbing installations, ventilation, gas piping and other building components. Inspectors perform a number of inspections during each phase of construction to verify compliance with code requirements. Inspections are not passed or approved until all code requirements are met.

Building Inspectors attain certifications through examination in various code related subjects. They regularly attend courses of instruction to further their technical knowledge, enhance their professional development and maintain their certifications. Building owners and the public benefit directly from having technically com-

petent and educated Inspectors reviewing and inspecting every phase of construction.

It should be noted that City Building Inspectors do not perform inspections on existing homes where a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued unless a complaint is received that the home is in violation of the International Property Maintenance Code. Inspections of existing homes listed for sale must be performed by private Home Inspectors hired by either the seller or the buyer.

Whether you are relaxing at home, shopping at a store or watching a movie at a theater, you can be rest assured that a Building Inspector played a major role in ensuring your safety, health and welfare.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is insulation required to insulate the floor of a home with a crawl space?

A: Yes, the International Residential Building Code requires that insulation be installed between the floor joists of a home with a crawl space. The minimum insulation required is unfaced batt insulation with an R-19 value.

Q: Is a permit required to install a new water heater to replace an existing and defective water heater?

A: Yes, a permit is required to install any water heater. If the water heater being replaced is electric and a new gas water heater is proposed, a licensed contractor must be used to install all new gas piping serving the new gas water heater.

Q: Why do I need to submit construction plans to build a deck onto my house?

A: There are hundreds of deaths and injuries each year due to improperly constructed residential decks. Many of those injuries occurred because of poorly framed decks

or decks which were improperly attached to the house or to main supports. There are minimum standards established for construction of decks. Construction plans provide the details necessary for the Building Department to verify compliance with code standards.



## Illegal Signs



As published in a previous newsletter, signs are not allowed at any time within any right-of-way of the City of Madison in accordance

with Chapter 7 of the Zoning Regulations.

Those signs found to be in the right-of-way and in violation will be promptly removed by Code Enforcement Officers and not returned to the owner under any circumstance.

It is the responsibility of the sign owner to verify the location of their signs to pre-

vent violation of the sign regulations.

Signs may be placed on private property with the property owners consent and with proper permits obtained where required.



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**We're on the Web!**

**[www.madisonal.gov](http://www.madisonal.gov)**